

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY L/M:JHSMITH:MFM
APPROVED BY L/M:KEMALMBORG
S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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NODIS
TO MARK FELDMAN FROM JEFFREY SMITH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AMIN, OGEN

SUBJECT: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE CLASSIFICATION
SYSTEM

AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING OF THE ICRC, THE NSC STAFF MEMBERS
GAVE ME THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSED PRM ON THE CLASSIFICATION
SYSTEM. THE PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO SIGN THIS WITHIN A
WEEK BUT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, ON A VERY
CLOSE HOLD BASIS, TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT PRM. IF YOU HAVE
ANY COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED TEXT, PLEASE TELEPHONE ME
PRIOR TO COB WEDNESDAY.

BEGIN TEXT: I AM CONCERNED BY THE CONTINUING ABUSE OF THE
CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM. TOO MUCH INFORMATION IS BEING
CLASSIFIED AND WITHHELD FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR
EXCESSIVE PERIODS OF TIME.

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ALTHOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED DURING THE PAST FIVE
YEARS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AS AMENDED,
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652 AND THE PRIVACY ACT, THESE ABUSES
STILL CONTINUE.

I THEREFORE DIRECT THAT A NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER BE PREPARED

WHICH WILL ESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES WITH RESPECT

TO THE CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION AND MATERIAL. THE NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER SHOULD:

- PROVIDE FOR THE MAXIMUM RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ON GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND POLICIES CONSISTENT WITH THE NEED TO PROTECT ESSENTIAL NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION;
- PROMOTE INCREASED PUBLIC ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION THROUGH A MORE RAPID DECLASSIFICATION PROGRAM;
- BE CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AS AMENDED AND THE PRIVACY ACT;
- REDEFINE THAT INFORMATION WHICH WARRANTS CONTINUED PROTECTION AND ESTABLISH THE PROPER CRITERIA FOR MAKING THIS JUDGEMENT;
- SIMPLIFY THE PRESENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM TO FACILITATE ITS UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION AND ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY AND DUPLICATIVE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES, THEREBY REDUCING EXPENSE;
- PROVIDE FOR CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES BY THE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES;

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- ESTABLISH IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AN OFFICE AUTHORIZED TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER AND TO OVERSEE THE CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES;

- PROVIDE DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS USE OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND DECLASSIFICATION SYSTEM BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

THE NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER SHALL BE PREPARED BY AN AD HOC COMMITTEE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS. IT SHOULD BE READY FOR MY SIGNATURE BY JUNE 15, 1977.

THIS PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW MEMORANDUM SUPERSEDES NATIONAL SECURITY STUDY MEMORANDUM 229.

CHRISTOPHER

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